

STANDING in the presence of this remnant of a noble army, the mind is carried through a lengthened mental vista; and in the presence of these veterans on whom the hand of time has laid his touch for many seasons, our train of thoughts must wander. Wander back through many seasons, both of dearth and plenty; wander back through many years of anxious longings, though likewise through years of happy satisfaction; wander back through many months when harvest moons were at their fullest, smiling radiance on prolific grainfields; back through many months, however, when the stars at night shown down upon the fields of desolation; wander back through days of gloom as well as days of splendor; days when drizzling rains brought blues and melancholy, and days when sunshine cheered the drooping spirits; back through nights of deathly stillness; though also nights when merry sounds and jingles waked the echoes; nights when solemn darkness was alone disturbed by the owlets' hootings; and nights made gladsome when the marriage bells were ringing. Through many seasons, years and months, days and nights like these. Through the dawn, the sunrise, and the morning; through the noontide, afternoon and evening; through the time for sunset, through the twilight, through the dusk and through the gloaming; through the hour when curfew tolls, through the early watches of the night till some patrolman voices forth that all is well, and then through that mystic time when spooks and ghosts and devils hold high carnival; at last, through those refreshing hours of sleep which come between midnight and morn before the bustle of the busy world is heard. Back through all of these our train of thoughts must run until it reaches back to when the forms now stooped walked forth erect;

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to when the hairs now tinged with gray or whitened by the snow of age were glittering in the sun like glossiest dark upon the raven's wing; to when the step now slow and feeble, too, trod forth as if some giant strode upon the earth, while his movements made the ground to tremble. Back to that time when you were in your vigor and your prime. That was many years ago. And on these years our mind now dwells on this Reunion day. It was five and forty years ago.

Five and forty years have added countless facts and changes to the store of earthly happenings since the day when you were mustered out. Nearly five decades have passed since you returned from scenes of war where victory crowned your arms upon the battlefields of Mexico. Almost half a century has flown since you were welcomed back as heroes who had earned renown in many a hard-fought contest with the nation's foes. But the laurels which the nation then had plucked are just as bright to-day as when its hand of gratitude was weaving them in wreaths with which to deck the victor's brow. Although five and forty years have added unto history's store, although nearly five decades have passed and almost half a century flown, yet through all the intervening span of time the victor's brow has proudly worn the wreath his nation placed thereon, and the victor feels to-day as if no grander badge could mark distinction's form than when the country singles out its brave and puts the stamp of Patriot on some worthy son.

Well may this remnant gathered here feel those emotions pure that spring from patriot breasts, because the world has never seen nor heard of grander men than these and their heroic comrades dead, who left their homes and at their country's call marched forth to battle with a foreign foe on foreign soil; against oppression's wrongs; against aggression's hostile power; against invasion of established

rights. Well may you feel a patriot's pride, for justice never weighed a cause more just than yours. The reasons which produced the strife in which you played your part with skill were such that history will forever tell your glorious deeds, while with their pens dipped in oblivion's inky black, historians will erase the acts of infamy by which a vain and overbearing race sought to bring insult and shame upon the honor of a nation which has ever kept its honor pure.

The history of that strife in brief is this: Beginning with the Alamo and ending with the capture of the ancient capital of Old Mexico. The sixth of March of 1836 beheld a stubborn fight, the fame of which is written by the side of that defense which held the Pass of Old Thermopylea. More than two thousand years ago three hundred Spartans brave, beneath the guidance of Leonidas, defied the power of Xerxes and his Persian hosts until the last brave Spartan fell upon the spot where afterwards a monument was raised which bore the words: "Go stranger, tell at Sparta that we died here in obedience to her laws." A hundred and eighty three were numbered in the garrison behind the walls of the Alamo. This little band, under the command of Col. Travis, were engaged with Spartan-like courage in the cause of achieving the Independence of Texas. And, like that Spartan band which fell at Oeta's pass, they held their ground until the last grand hero died. Against an overwhelming force they threw themselves into the scale of war, until amid the groans of ten hundred Mexicans, who went to death, they themselves expired. There the fearless Bowes fell, intrepid David Crockett died, and William Travis met that fate which couples his immortal name with that of Sparta's Chief. No messenger was left of them to tell the tale of how they fought and strove and bled and died that Texas might be free. The messenger of death alone could tell that tale. The one word, "Alamo," was left to tell the tale. And on the twenty-first of June,

in 1836, the Texans cheered each other with this word when on the San Jacinto's banks they met the fifteen hundred troops of General Cos. There Houston cheered them on with fiery words, and as they leaped upon their foes, the war-cry was "The Alamo." In less than half an hour they put the Mexicans to rout. The Mexicans had twice the number of Sam Houston's force. Only five and twenty counted all the Texans loss; two were killed and three and twenty wounded; while on the other side some seven hundred men were killed and an equal number captured. On that night a pale and trembling prisoner was brought to General Houston's tent. The guards had found him in a swamp. Houston slept the tired victor's sleep and would not wake. Next morning when he woke he found that Santa Anna had been brought and sought protection at his hands. Santa Anna's life was spared, but on condition that the evacuation of Texas should be complete and its independence be assured. Thus the fight at San Jacinto avenged the slaughter of the Alamo, and from the blood of martyrs sprang a new Republic. Texas was acknowledged as an independent Republic in 1837 by the United States, and later on by Belgium, France and England.

Mexico had been a Republic since 1824. But, as in all of the Spanish States which have made attempts to establish Republican institutions, the stability of the government rested on very slender and shaky foundations. As a monarchy she had been a bad neighbor, and her advent into the world as a Republic did not make her a *good* neighbor. Hence, after her establishment in 1824 as the Republic of Mexico, she was continually engaged in civil wars that threatened her internal peace as well as the peace of her neighbors. Her pirates plundered American vessels in the Gulf, and she confiscated the property of Americans within her borders. Our remonstrance was in vain, until in 1831, when she agreed to a treaty and

promised redress. Her promise was not redeemed. Instead of redress came further aggressions. By 1840 the amount of American property appropriated by Mexicans aggregated \$6,000,000. The United States and Mexican Commissioners met in 1840. The Mexican Commissioners acknowledged \$2,000,000. In 1843 they acknowledged the whole \$6,000,000 and promised to pay the amount in \$300,000 installments. Three of these were paid, and the Mexican Government refused to decide as to the balance. The matter was still unsettled in 1845, when the matter of the annexation of Texas to the United States came up. It was on the last day of President Tyler's administration that he sent a messenger to the Texan government with a copy of the joint resolution of Congress for annexation. On the 4th day of March, 1845, President Polk's administration began. On the 6th day of March General Almonte, the Mexican Minister, protested against the actions of the United States and demanded his passports. This was followed by President Herrera, of Mexico, issuing a proclamation of rights and an appeal to arms. The resolution of Congress was taken up by a convention of delegates met to form a constitution for Texas and approved by them on the 4th of July. This annexation and the non-payment of the balance due for spoliation caused the friendly relations between the two nations to be broken. Then came the great struggle wherein a hundred thousand of your number, without the modern improvements in war-like weapons, measured your strength with squirrel rifles and flint-locks against a force oftentimes outnumbering you by many thousands; but coming out of every conflict having achieved a signal victory over the enemy, and finally, after a series of unbroken victories, entering in triumph into the very capital of the ancient empire of the Montezumas. It would be a long recital to narrate the details of every battle, of every skirmish and of every preparation. It would take a thousand volumes to tell the story of the bravery of each

individual soldier, and yet each private with his flint-lock was as true and loyal as his General with his epaulettes and saber. In speaking, then, of these great triumphs that added empire to this nation, let the deeds of all the hundred thousand be remembered while giving credit to the chieftains who led the conquering armies and whose names are singled out in writing history for convenience.

As soon as the friendship between the nations was broken the commander of the troops in the Southwest was ordered by the President to Texas, and to assume a position near the Rio Grande. This commander was well chosen and well fitted for this expedition. He had qualities of mind and heart which rendered him the master of the war-like situation. No fitter man could anywhere have been selected than General Zachary Taylor. His soubriquet of "Rough and Ready" was no hollow-meaning title, for in his nature he was as pure, though crude a diamond as e'er was found among the universe of gems. With his force of 1,500 men, the "Army of Occupation," he was to act with the squadron sent into the Gulf for its protection. Landing at St. Joseph's Island, he embarked for Corpus Christi and formed a camp beyond the River Nueces, where he spent the autumn and the winter. With the opening of the year, the War Department sent him to the Rio Grande, where the Mexicans were gathering for the purpose of invasion on the soil of Texas. At Point Isabel he camped and left some stores and men, and, with a thousand troops, advanced until he reached the river's bank across from Matamoras. Here they built a fort, named after Major Brown, who was stationed in command. President Herrera, of Mexico, was inclined to peace, and hence became unpopular. Paredes displaced him. The new President dispatched Ampudia with an overwhelming force to drive the Americans beyond the River Nueces. When Ampudia wrote a letter asking Taylor to withdraw in twenty-four hours old "Rough and

Ready" gave a flat refusal. Then Ampudia wavered, and he was displaced by General Arista. The change of generals was disagreeable for the Americans, for parties of Mexicans cut off communication between Taylor and his store at Point Isabel, and Arista gained strength and reinforcements. Information came that Mexican troops were crossing the Rio Grande above the encampment of Taylor, and he sent Capt. Thornton and sixty dragoons, sixteen of whom were killed. This was the first blood of the war. When the fort opposite Matamoras was nearly completed Gen. Taylor went to the relief of Point Isabel, which was menaced by 1,500 Mexicans. Construing this into a retreat, the Mexicans in Matamoras, with their battery, commenced an attack on Fort Brown and the handful of men in garrison that had been left with instructions to signal with heavy guns when relief was needed. The little garrison resisted long and well till Major Brown was mortally wounded. Then the signals were given, and Taylor started back, leaving Point Isabel in the evening with 2,000 men. At noon of the next day he met the Mexicans under Arista on the prairies of Palo Alto, 6,000 strong, and ready for battle. Despite the disparity of numbers, in five hours 600 Mexicans were killed and wounded, while only 53 Americans were lost, and the first victory of the bloody campaign had been won.

That night again the signal guns were heard. On, the victors pushed to relieve the fort. Next evening, in a deep ravine, Arista and his 7,000 troops appeared to stop the march of Taylor and his 1,700 men. The battle did not last as long as on the day before, but in the carnage full a thousand Mexicans fell, while victory perched upon our flag again and hovered o'er Resaca de la Palma's deep ravine. Then on, the victors pushed until they reached the fort. The garrison was still within its walls, and when relief was brought at last they had withstood the shot and shell for a hundred and sixty hours past. The

news of these two victories won, then reached the States. Congress gave \$10,000,000 to the cause and authorized the chief executive to call for 50,000 volunteers. Then came that giant plan that sent a fleet around Cape Horn to storm the western coast of Mexico, while to the "Army of the West" that formed at Leavenworth the duty was assigned to meet the fleet along the coast after having overrun New Mexico. Meanwhile the "Army of the Center" was to make invasions from the north. Taylor kept right on. He crossed the Rio Grande. He captured Matamoras on the other side and started after Gen. Worth to join him in the siege of Monterey, which drove Ampudia to surrender up his sword. While these victors thus were moving through victorious scenes another brave and valiant soldier trained the volunteers at Bexar, and when discipline had been enacted Gen. Wool came also to the rescue. Wool and Worth and Taylor acted then in concert. Saltillo and Victoria and Tampico were surrendered. The campaign in this region was successful. And, when a portion of this army was ordered to the aid of Gen. Scott, the remainder, under Wool and Taylor, fought until they met with a successful conclusion. This conclusion came when, with their 5,000 remaining troops, they met and conquered the 20,000 men of Santa Anna on the bloody field at Buena Vista, where they fitly celebrated the anniversary of the natal day of Washington. This concludes the story of the conquest of the North of Mexico. The hero now went home to meet a shower of plaudits from his grateful country. The history of the "Army of the West" consists in starting from the Fort at Leavenworth, and traversing the desert plains to Santa Fe: They took possession of the place and started on the way to California, but ere long were met by messengers who told how Fremont had already planted our colors on its soil. The closing scenes of this war lay along the route from Vera Cruz to Mexico. Scott had landed in the Bay of Vera

Cruz. Immediately he stormed the Castle of San Juan D'Ulloa, and started on that grand triumphal march that ended when he rode into the streets of the chief city of the Government of Mexico. Cerro Gordo and Jalapa and Perote and Puebla followed in succession with the shifting of war's great kaleidoscope. The center was now reached. The tug at last had come. Around the city of the ancient empire for miles the landscape was a scene of tents, and camps and forts. On every hand the martial hosts were seen arrayed. On that summer day of August, 1847, amid the heat of the tropics, the patriots stormed the fortress of Contreras, and the entering wedge was planted. San Antonia yielded next. Then Cherubusco on its heights was taken. Santa Anna fled into the capital. With his usual craft and cunning he asked an armistice, which Scott refused, and on, the Patriots marched to take the city. At El Molinos del Rey, 14,000 troops were driven from position. Chepultepec alone was left to bar the entrance. But the castle soon was shattered, and on its ruins the stars and stripes were planted. The last stronghold had then submitted, and the pursuit was carried to the gates. That night the Mexican army fled. Next day the citizens asked Scott to spare their city. On Sept. 14 he took possession, and the capital had yielded. The cause of Mexico went down, and shortly after at the Treaty of Guadalupe Hildago, the Eagle of this country, soared aloft into a sky of glory. By this treaty the boundary lines were fixed. By this conquest you brought an empire to the nation's great domain; you added new states and territories; and from this brief recital will be seen you added fame and glory to our arms. Among the world's great roll of names the names of Scott and Taylor shall stand forth above the names of Caesar and Napoleon. The names of Wool and Worth will be revered wherever freedom's sun shall shed its rays; while a hundred

thousand other names shall adorn our history's page the
names of as grand a set of men as e'er marched forth to
victory or the soldier's grave.

